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USSR VERSION OF ALBANIAN HISTORY;
EMIGRE PRESS SCORES TIRANA BROADCAST

Soviet Version of Recent Albanian History

The following is taken from N. Shmelev's book, Novaya Albaniya (New Albania), published in Moscow in 1951. In view of the constant insistence by the USSR in its aid in the liberation of Albania, it is interesting to see exactly what the USSR claims to have done for Albanian liberation. It is also noteworthy that Mehmet Shehu's name is nowhere mentioned, even in the account of the war of liberation. All dates are as given in the text.

In the past, Albania had served as ready money in the hands of the imperialists. The Albanian people often had to struggle against imperialistic brigands striving to gain possession of its territory. Stoically and manfully it fought Italian, French, Greek, and other occupiers trying to usurp various parts of its country.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia inspired the Albanians to carry on a decisive fight for freedom and independence. The national liberation movement in Albania reached unprecedented dimensions. In January 1920, a meeting of representatives of all Albanian prefectures was held in Lushnje. Repudiating the foreign protectorate (the Italian mandate established by the Paris Peace Conference in 1920), the meeting proclaimed Albania an independent state and formed a government.

On 28 June 1920, to forestall a popular revolution in Albania, the Italian government renounced its protectorate. On 9 November 1920, the Council of Ambassadors at London was obliged formally to confirm the independence of Albania.

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This action, however, did not change the position of the country. It remained completely dependent upon the imperialistic powers. Corrupted by long cooperation with foreign conquerors, the feudal lords, usurping the government, bargained right and left with the interests of their country. Such traitorous policies were a distinguishing mark of the regime of Ahmet Zog, one of the great feudal lords, who heads the feudal Moslem clique.

The antinational and antipeople policies of Zog roused discontent among the masses. In 1923, Zog's government was defeated in the elections but, despite this expression of the people's will, remained in power. In 1924, Zog's government was swept out by an armed uprising led by the famous bishop Fan Noli, leader of the so-called Liberal Party, the party of the young Albanian bourgeoisie. Fearing the wrath of the people, Zog fled to Yugoslavia for refuge.

Fan Noli's government, established in Vlore, yielded to the pressure of the masses which had put it in power, and promised immediate reforms. However, no very decisive moves toward reform took place. The Albanian bourgeoisie was afraid both of the masses and of the feudal or foreign imperialists. Even the foreign policy of Fan Noli was two-faced. After establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR, Fan Noli's government quickly knuckled under to an ultimatum from England and other imperialistic powers and demanded the departure of the Soviet mission from Tirana.

Fear of the people and dread of a final break with feudal circles shackled all government action. The masses ceased to support the government, and a feudal reaction resulted. At the end of 1924, Zog's bands, formed and armed in Yugoslavia, invaded Albania. Fan Noli's government fell and Zog's regime returned to power. On 22 January 1925, Albania was formally declared a republic with Ahmet Zog as president. In 1928, Zog converted Albania into a monarchy and proclaimed himself king.

The years of Ahmet Zog's reign were one of the darkest periods in the history of the long-suffering Albanian people. He sold his country to Italian imperialists. Albania was entangled in a web of inequitable agreements. Its foreign policy was completely controlled by Rome. On 22 November 1927, Zog signed an Italo-Albanian military pact, ending the independence of the Albanian army, and turning the Albanian government into a puppet government.

Italian imperialists were not the only ones who had the freedom of Zog's court. American and British businessmen also enriched themselves by pillaging Albania. Wide concessions were granted to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and to the Standard Oil Company. All sorts of companies preyed on the country. The Albanian government, army, and police were swarming with agents of Italy, Germany, England, the US, and other imperialistic powers.

While Zog and his clique enriched themselves at the expense of Albania, the masses led a miserable existence.

In the 1930's, Mussolini took over the government of Albania as part of the fascist plan of Balkan penetration. He invaded Albania in 1939 and incorporated it in the Italian empire.

Zog fled. The demoralized army put up no organized resistance. The British gave Albania a stab in the back. Chamberlain announced in Parliament that Britain had no interests in Albania and would not intervene with Mussolini. The Albanians could rely only on themselves to resist invasion. Betrayed by their leaders and the so-called Western Democracies, the people heroically resisted the Italian invaders. Volunteer groups fought at Durres, Vlore, and Elbasan, but on 13 April Mussolini was in occupation of all Albania, which became an Italian colony.

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The Italo-German fascists did not conceal their desire to use Albania as a springboard for aggression. From Albanian bases, Mussolini fell upon Greece.

But the Albanian fight for freedom continued. Five bands of partisans, totaling 3,000 members, were formed in the first days of the occupation, and grew daily and hourly. Since the 1930's, Communist groups had led the people's fight against the usurpers. Communists, as in all other European countries under fascist aggressors, stood beside the people in the tragic hours of its existence. They held the most dangerous posts, keeping up the courage of the people and its confidence in victory.

Under Communist guidance, in the first 3½ years of Italian occupation, the partisans destroyed 69 bridges, 77 depots, 162 automobiles, and 5 armored cars, and captured 85 machine guns and many other weapons. By 1942, there were 40 partisan bands, totaling 10,000 members, in operation. Meanwhile the occupying army had lost 4,467 men killed, 3,670 wounded, and 436 taken prisoner. Such successes in the national liberation struggle would not have been possible without the organization and agitation work carried out by the Communists.

On 8 November 1941, three groups of Communists, which had been acting separately, met in a cellar in Tirana. This conference proclaimed the establishment of the Albanian Communist Party, and elected a central committee headed by Enver Hoxha, who had already won respect in the struggle for freedom.

The formation of the Communist Party at this time was no accident. The report presented by Stalin before the Moscow Soviet and his speech at Red Square on 7 November 1941, full of confidence in the Soviet victory over fascist brigands, roused all the peoples of Europe who were under the heel of occupiers. The Stalin appeal for merciless war against fascists penetrated even to the distant mountains of Albania.

In 1941, the first leaflet put out and illegally distributed throughout Albania by the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party called upon the whole people to take up arms and fight for liberation.

The leader of this fight for liberation, Enver Hoxha, had been in France in his youth; there he had made friends with French Communists, especially with the editor of Humanite, and had become an admirer of the USSR. On his return to Albania, Hoxha established connections with Communist groups, taught cadres, and prepared them for future war for Albania's freedom. Other patriotic groups joined the movement under his leadership.

In 1942, the Communists initiated the formation of the National Council for War Against the Fascists, and the organization of a national government. In the same year, the conference of representatives to the National Council at Peze elected a General Council for National Liberation. The next step was the June 1943 meeting of the general staff of the Albanian National Liberation Army, in Labinot. Under Enver Hoxha, this staff meeting formed the partisan groups into brigades and corps with a unified strategic plan.

In September 1943, because of the defeat of Hitler's army on the Soviet front, Italy capitulated. By this time the National Liberation Army was in control of the situation. The Italian divisions in Albania were disarmed. But then the German usurpers moved in.

Hitlerian propaganda blared that the German entry into Albania was actuated by the desire to free Albania from the Italians. A puppet government under Mustafa Kruja was established in Tirana, but the real power was in the hands of the German General Schlippe /Schlieper?. The partisans were not

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deceived, however, and in the early days of the German occupation, the building where the puppet government assembled was bombarded from the hills around Tirana. In December 1943, the Germans undertook a campaign against the partisans, but without much success. A second attack by the Germans was thrown back. During the spring and summer of 1944, the southern part of the country was cleared of German occupiers.

The Albanian people were now fighting on two fronts: against the Italo-German fascists and against the traitors in the feudal-bourgeois organizations, Balli Kombetar (National Front) and the Legality Party. These organizations, aided by the Americans and British, always try to pass as members of the resistance movement, but they are enemies of the people and desire the restoration of Zog, Medhi Frasheri, Abas Kuci, and others.

It is now known that Ali Kelcyra, member of the Balli Kombetar, signed an agreement, in the name of Frasheri, to cooperate with the Italians against the National Liberation Army.

The Albanians were angered when they learned of the duplicity of the emissaries of Washington and London, who secretly cooperated in the war against the National Liberation Army.

In November 1944, Tito's representative, Velimir Stojnich, tried to have Balli Kombetar included in the leading organizations of the national liberation movement. He also increased the number of his agents in Albania. From 1943 on, Tito's representative, Svetozar Vukmanovich, both representatives' names transliterated from the Russian/, the old English spy, had tried to organize an international general staff through which the Tito-Rankovic band hoped to establish an Anglo-American imperialist government over all Balkan countries. But the Albanian Communist Party was not caught in Tito's snare. They isolated the members of Balli Kombetar and the Legality Party and threw them out of Albania.

Bit by bit the Liberation Army freed its country. On 24 March 1944, the First Antifascist Congress of National Liberation met in the freed city of Premet, to which the National Council sent representatives. The Congress changed the name of the General Council for National Liberation of Albania to the Antifascist Council for National Liberation of Albania, and proclaimed it the highest legislative body in the country. The Antifascist Committee of National Liberation was made the executive committee.

The approach of the Soviet Army, which had won a brilliant victory in the Balkans, inspired the Albanian patriots and enormously increased the strength of their blows against Albania's enemies, who had to throw all their resources against the Soviet offensive. Marching many kilometers through the mountains, units of the National Liberation Army overtook the German-Italian army from the rear, destroyed their communications, and decimated their manpower. On 29 November 1944, the fascist usurpers were driven from their last base on Albanian territory.

But the war was not over. The German Army was putting up a strong resistance in Yugoslavia. Strong German forces, cut off in the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, were trying to force their way northward through Albanian territory. After finishing its own war, the National Liberation Army took part in liberating Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Metohija. The freedom-loving peoples of Europe will never forget the Albanian Army's contribution to the war against fascism.

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From the moment of fascist Italy's attack on Albania, the sympathies of the USSR were irrevocably on the Albanian side. The USSR never acknowledged the pretensions of the imperialist powers to Albanian territory. In December 1942, in a special declaration, "On the Independence of Albania," the Soviet government pointed out that the USSR, in full sympathy with the courageous war of liberation waged by Albanian patriots against the Italian occupiers, did not recognize any Italian claims to Albanian territory, but wished to see Albania free from the yoke of fascist occupiers and her full independence restored.

This consistent position of the USSR presented a sharp contrast to the hypocritical conduct of the imperialist powers, the US and Britain, with regard to the war of liberation. The publication of the Soviet government's declaration at the height of the war of liberation in Albania contributed not a little to its success.

The Soviet government, the declaration said, is confident that the war of the Albanian people for its independence is one with the liberation wars of other Balkan peoples oppressed by the Italo-German occupiers, which peoples, in union with all freedom-loving nations, are expelling the usurpers from their lands. The problem of Albania's future form of government, the declaration continued, is a domestic affair and must be decided by the Albanian people itself.

Subsequent events completely justified the confidence of the Soviet government, inasmuch as the Albanian war ended in victory over the occupiers. Having expelled the usurpers, Albania chose the form of government which best suited the interests and hopes of its people, established a democratic people's regime, and set to work on building the bases of socialism.

The Albanian people owed its victory to the USSR, the Soviet Army, and the great Stalin. "The efforts of our people," said Enver Hoxha, "who shed their blood for liberation from the yoke of Italian-German fascists and from feudalism and bourgeoisie, all the victories achieved in the war for freedom, the new life of our people, and the happy and secure future before them are closely and indissolubly connected with the great Stalin. Without the great Stalin, without the USSR, without the renowned Soviet Army, we should never have been able to achieve these great victories. On the contrary, Albania would be governed, as in past centuries, by hangmen, and would suffer under the bloody boots of barbarous imperialist-colonizers."

Radio Tirana Falsifies Albanian History

The following is taken from the monthly newspaper Flamuri i Liris, published in Pristina in January 1953.

One cannot but be surprised on hearing news which has no relation to reality. It often happens that news or small items later turn out to be false. But how can anyone feel when he hears Albania's glorious past distorted and perverted? Surely he will be revolted and wish that he could force the lies down the throat of the liar.

Thus, we were surprised and revolted when we heard the stupid lies broadcast, as usual, by Radio Tirana. We are not talking about secondhand or third-hand slanders, but about the falsification of our history now in progress. Here are some pertinent examples.

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In broadcasts from 2300 to 2345 hours, 24 January 1953, in Greek, Italian, and Serbian, Radio Tirana informed us that no Albanians know anything about the illustrious history of our country, especially about the glorious history of the great and ancient Russo-Albanian friendship. Then some special "brother" produced new historical data with no relation to actual history, past or present.

"At the time of the legendary battles of the Albanian hero Skanderbeg," said Radio Tirana, "the greatest aid was given by the Russian people. This aid," the broadcaster added, "continued after Skanderbeg's death, and it took on a concrete form in the 16th Century."

We were waiting to hear what concrete form this aid took, but the speaker never explained, doubtless because the new historians did not discover a suitable falsehood in time.

"...At any rate the Albanian people must never forget its struggles and the aid of its Russian brother in the Russo-Turkish war in 1780, when a Russian captain left his post, collected over 10,000 inhabitants of Himare, and fought to liberate Albania. Thus a bloody battle developed..."

The speaker did not mention the name of the captain or finish the story of the bloody battle, but continued as follows:

"Then, too, in the war against Napoleon Bonaparte, the Russian Army made contact with Albanian peasants and organized them to throw off the feudal yoke of Ali Pasha of Tepelene, the oppressor of the Albanian people. On this occasion, as on others, it is easy to see what great aid the Russian people gave our peasantry against feudalism...and this, too, was brotherly aid."

The listener cannot but ask how the Russian people could aid the Albanians during the war against Napoleon when he was at the very gates of Moscow. Could this people, which was itself suffering under the tyranny of feudal rulers and landlords, aid our people in the struggle against Ali Pasha of Tepelene? Is the reason for these falsifications, perhaps, the desire to lessen the historical importance of Ali Pasha because he was a friend of Napoleon and an enemy of Tsarist Russia, and hence is disliked by the Tirana rulers? Readers will soon discover the object of these falsifications.

Radio Tirana next gave the following details of this noteworthy history:

"...In the 17th Century an Albanian bishop from Ohrid, Anastasi, went to Moscow to seek help from the tsar in liberating Albania. At the same time, another Albanian bishop, with the aid of the Russians, put himself at the head of the Albanian peasantry and fought against the Turks..."

Again the broadcaster did not finish the story about the request for aid or tell how the fight against the Turks ended, but continued as follows:

"...The Russian people also aided us in our fight against Kara Mahmud Pasha of Bushat, inasmuch as enough Russian officers arrived to organize the revolution of the Albanian people..."

So Radio Tirana must know that all these officers from the tsar's army were socialists, fighting against feudalism!

"...The greatest help given by the Russian people was in 1915 when the Russian government exposed the secret plan for the partition of Albania among capitalistic Balkan countries. And our people received all this aid merely through the pressure exercised by the proletariat on the government of Tsar Nicholas..."

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This was the biggest atomic bomb released by Radio Tirana, for, if the Russian people could swing the government as it wished, what need was there for Lenin's Great October Revolution?

And now we wish to make some short remarks. If everything that Radio Tirana says were true, why did none of us ever know about these events? We shall be told that antipeople governments would not allow it. But if such stories were true they would be preserved in the songs of the people, which often keep alive even small matters. Yet they do not celebrate the battle fought by 10,000 men from Himare. It is surprising also that Fan Noli, who has progressive support, did not include this aid of feudal lords against feudal lords in his history of Albania. These falsifications have no basis, but they have a purpose, which is to show us the "great aid" given us by our "brother" Russian people. Perhaps tomorrow we shall be told what Rumanians are being told today, that we are a tribe of the Russian race.

The life of such falsifications will not be long. Truth will prevail over the lies of Radio Tirana.

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